UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/11
16 May 1997

Original: ENGLISH

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-ninth session
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, submitted pursuant to Sub-Commission resolution 1996/12

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GE.97-12627 (E)

Introduction

The Commission on Human Rights adopted the Programme of Action for the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography in its resolution 1992/74, and requested the Sub-Commission to submit to it every two years a progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action by all States.

In its resolution 1996/12, the Sub-Commission requested the Secretary-General to invite all States to inform the Working Group of measures adopted to implement the Programme of Action and to submit a report thereon to the Sub-Commission at its forty-ninth session and to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session.

In order that the Working Group might examine this matter at its twenty-second session, the Secretariat, on 23 December 1996, sent notes verbales to Governments requesting the desired information. As of 13 May 1997, replies had been received from Estonia and Finland.

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

Estonia

[Original: English]
[22 January 1997]

In 1995, Estonia upgraded its Criminal Code. The new Criminal Code contains tough laws for the protection of minors. Specifically, the trafficking of minors and child prostitution are prohibited, as are the production, possession, and distribution of child pornography or persuading a person to engage in prostitution. The use of minors as objects of erotic or pornographic activity for the production of erotic and pornographic publications is similarly prohibited. At present, proposals to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of the law regarding child prostitution and the abuse of children in the production of pornographic materials is being studied by a working group.

Finland

[Original: English]
[5 May 1997]

The Government of Finland stated that the Government Bill on the reform of the provisions on sexual offences contained in the Penal Code (chap. 20) was given to Parliament on 14 February 1997. One aim of the Government Bill is to improve the legal protection of children in criminal cases.

Under existing legislation, possession of child pornographic material and the purchase of sexual services from persons under 18 years of age are not punishable acts. Under the Bill, these acts would become punishable offences.

It is proposed in the Bill that the sentences for certain offences be more severe, for example for the distribution of child pornography. Moreover,

the penalty for sexual abuse of a child would no longer be only a fine, but imprisonment. The grounds on which a person can be considered guilty of aggravated sexual abuse of a child would be made wider.

The authorities have mandated several working groups to deal with problems relating to the phenomenon of commercial sex. In 1994, the working group set up by the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior proposed several measures aimed at reducing prostitution and crimes relating to prostitution. In 1995, the committee appointed by the Ministry of Justice on commercial sex and prostitution made various proposals to reduce sex tourism and problems arising from sex bars and restaurants. In spring 1997, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, in cooperation with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, will carry out an information campaign concerning sex tourism.

The team of experts on prostitution set up by the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health gave its final report in 1996. The team emphasized the responsibility of different administrative sectors for dealing with prostitution and proposed certain measures for preventing prostitution and mitigating its negative effects.

The Government's equality programme, which was presented in February 1997, includes a chapter on commercial sex, prostitution and trafficking in wives, explaining the measures for which ministries will be responsible. The implementation of the Government's equality programme is monitored on a yearly basis.

Promoting sexual health and welfare has a preventive effect on prostitution; the development of young persons' knowledge of their sexuality has been found to be particularly important. Sex education is included in school curricula. Moreover, the State finances special projects in this field as well as projects to eliminate young persons' social exclusion, in order to further prevent prostitution among the young.

The annual voluntary collection for charity arranged by schoolchildren and students will in 1997 raise funds for the preventive work of the End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) movement against child sex tourism in Thailand. The organizers of the collection will deliver material relating to the issue to Finnish schools.

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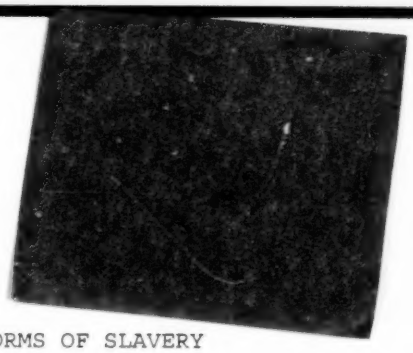

CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

Note by the Secretariat

1. By a letter dated 13 May 1997, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during periods of armed conflict, Ms. Linda Chavez, informed the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights that she was not in a position to submit her final report as requested by the Sub-Commission in its resolution 1996/11.

2. She also informed the Secretariat of her resignation as Special Rapporteur and expressed the wish that the study be continued by another member of the Sub-Commission.

GE.97-12828 (E)